

February 23, 2016

To whom it may concern:

My comments concern H.B. 5211, concerning Certificates of Need.

I am Dana Wiseman, MD, the Regional Medical Director of the Generations Family Health Center in Willimantic, Connecticut. We are a FQHC located just down the hill from Windham Hospital. You may be aware that Windham Hospital is part of Hartford HealthCare, and has been mandated to undergo cost cutting measures. They were able to reduce the size and intensity of service of their ICU recently without the need for a CON. It is now a Progressive Care Unit which means a lower level of staffing and with patients requiring less acute care. In short the patients are sick requiring additional nursing attention, but not critical. Critical care patients must be transferred, and usually got to Hartford Hospital by ambulance or medivac helicopter. Hartford Hospital sometimes has a shortage of these critical care beds, but usually finds a way to accommodate these patients. From a financial standpoint, Hartford Hospital makes money on these patients, and Windham Hospital loses money, since the sickest patients often generate the most revenue for a hospital. The doctors and citizens in the community are angry that their hospital is being made more unsound financially, and less safe for it citizens by the corporate HHC which they see as greedy, and they see a general decline in the reputation of the hospital as a result. There is concern further cuts will occur, and fewer patients will select to come to Windham Hospital and the hospital will be even less financially sound and viable.

There is another big piece to this that those of us in Willimantic have tried to bring to the attention of HHC. Many residents in Willimantic do not drive or have cars, in large part due to poverty, in part since they do not even speak English or have citizen status. This makes them challenging patients for us to care for and as a FQHC, we see a lot of this group at our center. They have a hard time getting to their appointments at our center, and to the places we want them to go, specialist offices, pharmacies, physical therapy, and for services still offered at the hospital. Many walk or ride a bicycle, some take a bus, but bus service is very limited to surrounding communities. We have a hard time getting our patients to specialty appointments in Norwich, Farmington, Hartford, Glastonbury and Storrs, to name a few sites we use. The more services that can be offered right in Willimantic, the better off our patients will be. Along with the cuts in the ICU, Windham hospital also threatened to cut outpatient diabetes education, the sleep lab and the wound clinic. They have moved the wound care services to the surgeons' offices and still offer sleep services and diabetes education, but no dietary services for outpatients. These kinds of cuts can be devastating for our patients and community and should require a CON as well. We have some of the sickest patients in the state coming to our center,

with a very high diabetic and cardiac disease population. Also Willimantic has a large group of people in drug and alcohol recovery, and with serious mental health problems.

The CON process will allow the patients and providers to provide valuable input into what is now a closed process.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dana Wiseman". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Dana Wiseman, MD
Regional Medical Director